



# Guardian Challenge 2004

Vol. 13 No. 4

Vandenberg AFB, Calif.

May 5, 2004



Photo by Master Sgt. Thomas Deering

**Staff Sgt. Duane Blackmon, 137th Security Forces Flight and Airman 1st Class Thanongsack Phanda, 21st Space Wing, Peterson AFB, Colo., get ready to transport a wounded pilot during the marksmanship exercise portion of Guardian Challenge.**

## Guard unit takes GC by storm

**Airman 1st Class Lauren Hasinger**  
*Guardian Challenge Public Affairs*

For the first time in Guardian Challenge history, members of the Air National Guard are shedding their civvies and demonstrating that they too are among the best of the best.

Three members from the 137th Security Forces Flight, under the 137th Space Warning Squadron from the Colorado National Guard are competing with members from the 21st Space Wing on marksmanship, tactics and the obstacle course. Three members from the squadron also competed in the space and missile warning operations event at their home base and are here awaiting their score.

"This is a historic occasion," said Col. Bill Hudson, 137th SWS commander. "When the Guard became part of the space force, it became a total force mission."

Representing the 137th SFF are Staff Sgts. Duane

Blackmon and Matthew Tussey. Staff Sgt. John Scott is serving as the alternate. They are serving with two active duty troops, Airmen 1st Class Steven Israel and Thanongsack Phanda, to make up the 21st SW's security forces team,

"[Sergeant Blackmon] is my personal hero. He's 41 years old," said Brig. Gen. Richard Webber, 21st SW commander.

The idea to have Airmen from the Guard compete with active duty came about because several of the security forces from the wing are deployed. The wing asked for volunteers from the Guard.

"The whole gravity of the integration of the Guard and active-duty starting from the very beginning was always positive," said Sergeant Blackmon. "We came together as one team one fight."

After the team competed in the tactics course, General

**See GUARD, Page 3**



## From the top

"These young people displayed great teamwork in high-pressure situations. The chefs did a great job getting the M-2 stove lit. The security forces teams demonstrated combat readiness, honed their skills and practiced innovative thinking in the field."

-- General Lance W. Lord  
Commander, Air Force Space Command

### Tomorrow's weather



**71/50**



### Firsts ...

In 1993, after the transfer of 20th Air Force and its ICBM units to AFSPC and the merger of space and missile career fields into the growing command, Olympic Arena was renamed Guardian Challenge to reflect AFSPC's Guardians of the High Frontier's motto.

## STAFF

GC Competition Commander..... Col. Robert Keyser  
Chief of Public Affairs ..... Jenna McMullin  
Deputy Chief of Public Affairs ..... Maj. April Jackson  
Chief of Community Relations..... Capt. Amy Sufak  
Chief of Media Relations..... 1st Lt. Michelle Mayo  
NCOIC of Media Relations..... Staff Sgt. Shad Eidson  
NCOIC of Public Affairs ..... Staff Sgt. Phyllis Duff  
Chief of Internal Information ..... Staff Sgt. Susan Mrowiec  
GC newsletter editor ..... Airman 1st Class Shaun Emery  
Staff Writer ..... Airman 1st Class Lauren Hasinger  
Staff Writer ..... Airman 1st Class Chris Smith  
Staff Writer ..... Airman 1st Class Katherine Booher

*This funded Air Force newsletter is an authorized publication for members participating in Air Force Space Command's space and missiles competition, Guardian Challenge. Contents of this newsletter are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force. The content is edited and prepared by the Guardian Challenge Public Affairs team, Vandenberg AFB, Calif. This newsletter is published daily during the competition.*

*Submissions should be sent to the GC Public Affairs office in the Vandenberg Center. All submissions will be edited for space to conform to standards set forth in the Air Force Instruction 35-301 and the Associated Press Stylebook. For more information, contact the editor at DSN 276-6272 or (805) 606-6272. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise noted.*



## AFSPC top-enlisted cheers on GC 2004 competitors

By Airman 1st Class Chris Smith

*Guardian Challenge Public Affairs*

The highest-ranking enlisted member of Air Force Space Command, Chief Master Sgt. Ron Kriete is back at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., to see his troops in action as they compete for top Space Command honors.

Attending the event was a welcome opportunity for the chief who was previously stationed at Vandenberg AFB.

"It's always good to come back to Vandenberg," said Chief Kriete. "And actually, it's really good to come back to Guardian Challenge and watch all the competition and competitors."

With the competition in full swing, the chief has had opportunities to see many of the ongoing events and the best of the command's assets doing what they have been training so long for.

Chief Kriete said he believes Guardian Challenge is good for fun and competition as well as a great place to provide real-world training.

"Any exercise or competition is good for us to hone our skills and present scenarios to individuals and test our skills to see if our training programs are on key," the chief said. "It shows anybody who does not like our way of life that we are dedicated to do things to the best of our ability. 'No' is not an option in our military and competition shows that we are still continuing to be the best Air and Space force in the world."

Aside from the competition keeping people's skills high and showing the world what our Air Force is made of, Chief Kriete said the competition does a great job of inspiring esprit de corps.

With the natural human drive to be competitive, coupled with the heightened competitive nature found in our military members, Guardian Challenge is a great way to boost troop morale, he said.

"We are very competitive in nature. I think anyone in our Air Force, and Space Command is no different, we have a lot of winners and they don't accept losing as an option," he said. "I think the experience of whether you win or lose during this Guardian Challenge will last you a career and a lifetime."

Chief Kriete expressed his confidence in the competitors and their abilities to shine during this week's events.

"They're experts in their fields. From what I've seen is they've got great attitudes when it comes to getting the job done. And attitude will get you through each day – a positive attitude."



Photo by Airman 1st Class Kurt Gibbons

**Chief Master Sgt. Ronalad Kriete, command chief master sgt. for Air Force Space Command.**

### **GUARD, from Page 1**

Webber said, "These guys just beat the scenario. Never has that happened in all my years as commander."

The space and missile warning operator team was made up of Tech. Sgt. Ken De Feo and Capt. Michael Bruno. Maj. Tom McKenna served as the alternate.

The 21st SW had a local competition to pick the best team and the 137th came out on top.

"It is astronomical! I can't believe the camaraderie that was being built for the whole event," said Sergeant De Feo. "If the 21st brings the Aldridge home, I'll be proud that the Guard helped."

The pioneers from the Guard who participated in this year's GC hope to prove that serving in the Guard is nothing to take lightly.

"It's about duty and the honor to serve," said Sergeant Blackmon. "That's what it's all about."

# Cops compete in real-world scenario

**By Airman 1st Class Katie Booher**  
*Guardian Challenge Public Affairs*

The air is charged with the sounds of security forces' gunfire during the Guardian Challenge tactics competition Tuesday.

Maj. Cory Pink, Guardian Challenge tactics course evaluator, said this year's cops were the most competitive group he's seen in a long time.

"We have numerous evaluators throughout the course and we have certain criteria for each area. For those areas that we each see, we evaluate numerically, then afterwards, we get together and compare scores," he said. "I think all the teams are faring very well. Their team movements are better than I've seen in other types of training evaluations and the teams are working very well together to take out the adversary."

During competition, teams attempted to find and completely disable a downed aircraft, recover a critical component and take that component to the landing zone to rendezvous with a helicopter to exit the area. During their mission, competitors engaged in firefights with six enemies who attempted to stop them from succeeding in their mission.

Both the competitors and the enemies wore Multipurpose Integrated Laser Engagement Systems gear, or Miles-2000 gear, which, according to Master Sgt. Jeffrey Cullen, is as life-like as it gets. The gear is accurate up to a range of 500 yards. A laser transmitter is attached to each M-16 A2 and when a player pulls their trigger, it emits a laser lights that simulates the gun's maximum effective range.

Competitors also wear vests on their bodies and special headgear mounted on their Kevlar helmet with special sensors attached. The sensors pick up the laser signal from an opponent's weapon, and a digital panel attached to the vest lets a player know if they've been killed



Photo by Senior Airman Karolina Gmyrek

**Staff Sgt Brian Johnson, 50th Space Wing, Schriever Air Force Base, Colo., secures his Multipurpose Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) 2000 gear prior to engaging in the Security Forces tactics exercise.**

or nearly hit when fired upon.

Evaluators can deduct points for many reasons including loss of control of or allowing access to a priority resource, failure to detect an unauthorized individual, incorrect security procedures, failure to sound an alarm, element members getting killed or not properly engaging enemy forces.

Competitors were impressed with the realism of the course.

"It was awesome," said Airman 1st Class Christopher Shultz. "It was extremely realistic from the environment to the helicopter picking us up."

Scores from this competition will be combined with the marksmanship and obstacle course competitions to create an over all score of 600 possible points. That score will be combined with the entire wing scores to compete for the Blanchard, Aldridge or the Schriever trophies.



# Evaluators test AFSPCs best chefs

**Airman 1st Class Lauren Hasinger**  
*Guardian Challenge Public Affairs*

With all the excitement buzzing around Cocheo Park this week, there are a few behind-the-scenes people who deserve their own recognition, the chef evaluators.

Just the sight of them marking their clipboards sends shivers down the spines of the competitors.

It might be surprising to know that those evaluating the competitors are really rooting for the chefs.

"We don't set them up for failure. We make sure they're doing what they're supposed to do," said Master Sgt. Daniel Jackson, Guardian Challenge chef coordinator. "I'm proud of them for being out there and doing their job."

Areas of the competition are set up to mimic what the chefs will experience in a deployed environment. The safety event is where the evaluators judge competitors on their ability to disassemble, reassemble and light an M2-A gasoline burner. The chefs receive annual training on the M2-A, which is the main unit used for field cooking.

The food service tests teams' ability to set up a food environment. Competitors have no knowledge of the menu they must work from before the event.

"It's very challenging," said Sergeant Jackson. "They must concentrate on the correct portion control of each ingredient."

Teamwork is also very important in all of the events, said Sergeant Jackson. Team members have to be aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Sergeant Jackson and the other evaluators hope the teams take back what they learn at Guardian Challenge and share it with their peers.

"It's a shame only two people can



Photo by Airman 1st Class Edmund Gibbons

**Airman 1st Class Frederick Guild and Staff Sgt Jason Shaw from 21st Space Wing, Peterson AFB Colo., run with an assembled M2 burner during a timed Chefs M2 Burner Event**

represent their base. I know they're all winners right there," said the chef coordinator.

"It's important that they be satisfied

when they're done," said Sergeant Jackson. "To see the final product and know that they did their best. All of their hard work and training paid off."

# Missile maintainer crews vie for trophy

By Airman 1st Class Chris Smith  
*Guardian Challenge Public Affairs*

The competition is underway at Guardian Challenge to see which Air Force Space Command team knows the most tools of the trade to maintain their missiles.

The 90th Wranglers, 341st Grizzlies and the reigning champs, the 91st Rough Riders, are the three teams in the missile maintenance competition that began Monday.

During competition, the two-member teams will face scenarios depicting possible real world events in several maintenance categories including inspecting, troubleshooting and repairing possible faults on a hydraulic pusher that is used to open and close launcher doors at a missile site, said missile maintenance evaluator, Master Sgt. Kieron Ennis.



Photo by Master Sgt. Thomas S. Deering

**Staff Sgt Brian Belan of the 91st Space Wing, Minot Air Force Base, N.D. tightens down a silo power cable during the missile maintenance team exercise portion of Guardian Challenge.**

The pusher, which is used to slowly open launcher doors that normally blow off during a launch, will have the same undisclosed mechanical problems for each team competing. The team will be able to earn up to 300 points for the evaluation.

Teams will be given a base time limit to complete any troubleshooting and repairs necessary. The team will lose points for errors made.

The team will also lose points if the test takes longer than the base time limit. They will continue to lose points until the maximum time limit expires, in which they will have to stop the test if not already finished.

According to Tech. Sgt. Scotty Willis, the competition is a good training method for the competitors as well as those setting up the evaluation.

"It serves a good purpose," said Sergeant Willis. "We get to work on [maintaining missile systems] to a depth we don't normally get to do," he said. "And it's usually lower ranking enlisted members [competing], so it's a good opportunity for them to shine."

There are several other categories in the missile maintenance field; electronics laboratory, pneumatic maintenance, facilities maintenance and munition team evaluations.

Chief Master Sgt. Daniel Koveleskie, 20th Air Force maintenance superintendent, said the competitions for missile maintenance crews at Guardian Challenge are beneficial to them here as well as in real-world situations.

"The good the competition does is in the preparation they do for it," the chief said. "When the teams are done with their training, their units actually have two experts because they've been across the full spectrum of maintenance procedures on that equipment and (know everything about it.)"

Evaluations for missile maintenance teams are scheduled to run through Thursday afternoon.

## Codes teams decipher cryptic messages during competition

By Airman First Class Katie Booher  
*Guardian Challenge Public Affairs*

Tucked away inside a codes vault, the Guardian Challenge Code Controller Teams launched into competition.

The coding professionals are responsible for the intercontinental ballistic missile code system components for ICBM launch control centers and facilities. Their mission helps ensure the security and effective maintenance of the Air Force's ICBM forces.

During their timed evaluations, the competitors accomplish a Wing Code Processing System scenario and a 50-question written exam. Competitors take the written test individually, but respond to hands-on scenarios as a team.

Competitors in this event hail from the 91st Space Wing, Minot Air Force Base, N.D., the 90th SW, F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo. and the 341st SW, Malmstrom AFB Mont.

"[During the competition] we'll introduce code competitors to scenarios and evaluate their ability to properly code the weapons system components while fulfilling missile safety requirements," said Maj. Timothy Bishop, a 20th Air Force codes evaluator.

"The competitors seem very energetic and prepared to perform these tasks," he said.

One such competitor is Capt. Michelle Tetzlaff, from the 91st SW. Earlier today she completed the closed-book written test.

"I feel really confident about how we're doing," the captain said. "We're ready to bring it home."

“I’ve never seen anything like it,” said Capt. Kevin Brackin, 50<sup>th</sup> SW Operations Support Squadron, Schriever AFB, Colo. “I bet nobody else has a collection like that.”